

Message Text

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53

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01

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R 201506Z APR 76

FM AMMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1550

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION GENEVA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, NO

SUBJ: AMBASSADOR BYRNE'S FAREWELL TOTHE NORWEGIAN TRADE
UNION FEDERATION (LO)

SUMMARY LO'S TOP LEADERSHIP HELD SPECIAL FAREWELL LUNCHEON FOR AMBASSADOR BYRNE APRIL 9 TO EMPHASIZE THEIR CLOSE RELATIONSHIP OF MUTUAL CONFIDENCE AND TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE AMBASSADOR'S CONTRUBITION IN BRINGING ABOUT RENEWED DIALOGUE AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS BEWTWEN LO AND THE AFLO-CIO. THE LUNCHEON SHOWED LO'S PLEASURE THAT THE US GOVERNMENT HAD RECOGNIZED LABOR'S PREEMINENT ROLE IN NORWAY BY SENDING AND AMBASSADOR WITH A TRADE UNION BACKGROUND, CLOSE TO THE AFL/CIO, AND ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE NORWEGIAN LABOR MOVEMENT. THE ILO, THE AFL-CIO'S MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN EUROPE AND THE JUST CONCLUDED INCOMES NEGOTIATIONS WERE MAIN TOPICS OF CONVERSATION. END SUMMARY.

1. IN AN UNUSUAL GESTURE LO PRESIDENT TOR ASPENGREN HOSTED AN OFFICIAL LO FAREWELL LUNCHEON FOR AMBASSADOR BYRNE APRIL 9 WHICH TURNED OUT THE ENTIRE LO TOP
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LEADERSHIP, LO VICE PRESIDENT ODD HOJDAHL, TREASURER

EINAR STRAND, FIRST SECRETARY LEIF HARALDSETH, SECOND SECRETARY (FORMER MINISTER) TOR HALVORSEN, INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY KAARE SANDEGREN AND EMBASSY LABATT WERE PRESENT.

2. IN A WARM FAREWELL SPEECH, ASPENGREN PRAISED THE US FOR SENDING AN ABLE AMBASSADOR WITH A TRADE UNION BACKGROUND, WITH WHOM NORWAY'S TRADE UNION LEADERSHIP FELT AT HOME AND COULD SPEAK WITH CONFIDENCE AND FRANKNESS. ASPENGREN RECALLED THEIR CLOSE CONTACTS AND SAID HE HOPED THIS WOULD HELP OVERCOME THE SCEPTICISM WITH WHICH HE FELT MANY AMERICAN DIPLOMATS HAD VIEWED NORWAY'S SOCIALIST LABOR MOVEMENT OVER THE YEARS. ASPENGREN EXPRESSED SPECIAL APPRECIATION FOR THE AMBASSADOR'S SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO REESTABLISH TRADITIONAL CLOSE TIES BETWEEN NORWAY AND THE AFL-CIO. ASPENGREN SPOKE WITH PLEASURE ABOUT EACH OF THE RECENT AFL-CIO VISITS HERE AND OF THE HOJDAHL -SANDEGREN VISIT TO THE AFL-CIO LAST FALL. THE AMBASSADOR RESPONDED IN KIND TO ASPENGREN'S TALK. ASKED IN RESPONSE TO HIS QUESTION ASPENGREN SAID HE MIGHT VISIT THE US THIS FALL.

3. THE AMBASSADOR ASKED HOW NORWAY WAS ADDRESSING THE ILO SITUATION. ASPENGREN AND THE OTHERS EXPRESSED CONCERN AT THE US THREAT TO PULL OUT. THEY AGREED WITH THE US ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEMS AT THE ILO AND SAID THAT THE US NOTICE OF INTENT WAS HAVING A SALUTARY EFFECT, CREATING PRESSURE FOR REFORM. THEY WERE WORRIED, HOWEVER, THAT THE US WOULD RAISE THE ANTE TOO HIGH ASKING MORE THAN WAS ATTAINABLE AND THEN ABANDON THE ILO FIELD TO ITS ENEMIES. THEY SAW THE POLITICIZATION AND DUE PROCESS QUESTIONS AS RELATIVELY EASY TO HANDLE AND THOUGH THE DOUBLE STANDARD SITUATION COULD ALSO BE IMPROVED. THE RELATED TRIPARTITE AND STRUCTURAL QUESTIONS WERE MORE DIFFICULT, THEY BELIEVED, AND SOME COMPROMISE SOLUTION WOULD PROBABLY BE NECESSARY. ASPENGREN WORRIED THAT CONFRONTATION RATHER THAN ACCOMMODATION WITH THE LESS DEVELOPED WORLD, IN THE ILO AND ELSEWHERE, WOULD LEAD TO A COMMUNIST-THIRD WORLD ALLIANCE AND THAT ITS CONFRONTATION WITH THE WESTERN WORLD WOULD LEAD TO AN EXPLOSION.

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4. THE NORWAY LEADERS WERE DELIGHTED THAT THE AFL-CIO IS REENTERING THE EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION SCENE ACTIVELY AGAIN IN THE BATTLE OVER THE ILO. SANDEGREN SPOKE ENTHUSIASTICALLY OF PARTICIPATION BY AFL-CIO'S PAUL BARR IN A JUST COMPLETED INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS (ICFTU) PREPARATORY CONFERENCE FOR THE ILO EMPLOYMENT CONFERENCE THIS JUNE

(COMMENT:LO WOULD LIKE THE AFL-CIO TO REJOIN THE ICFTU, BUT THE AFL-CIO HAS SAID IT DOES NOT INTEND TO.) SANDEGREN LEARNED AT THAT CONFERENCE THAT THE AFL-CIO IS REACTIVATING ITS MEMBERSHIP IN THE TRADE UNION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TUAC) OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD). (COMMENT LO HAS LONG EXPRESSED KEEN INTEREST IN AN AFL-CIO RETURN TO THE TUAC, AS THE BEST WAY TO GET THE AFL-CIO BACK INTO KEY INTERNATIONAL LABOR MEETINGS IF IT WILL NOT REJOIN THE ICFTU.)

5. CHARACTERISTICALLY, HOJDAHL FLOATED A TRIAL BALLOON. HE SUGGESTED STRENGTHENING TRADE UNION AND EMPLOYER INFLUENCE IN THE OECD, TO MAKE IT TRIPARTITE, SO IT COULD ASSUME THE ILO'S ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS AND PURSUE ITS GOALS FROM A WESTERN TRADE UNION STANDPOINT. AT THE SAME TIME, HE WOULD ALLOW THE ILO TO DIMINISH GRADUALLY IN IMPORTANCE, IF THE EFFORT TO RESTORE TRIPARTITE VIGOR THERE FAILED AS HE SUSPECTED IT MIGHT. HE THEN NEEDLED THE US GOVERNMENT, SUGGESTING WE STOP BLOCKING STRONG TUAC INFLUENCE AND LET THE OECD BECOME TRIPARTITE.

6. ALL CONCLUDED BY ACKNOWLEDGING THE SERIOUSNESS OF ILO'S SITUATION AND OF THE US MOTIVES AND HOPING THAT COOPERATION BETWEEN US, NORWAY AND OTHER LIKE MINDED COUNTRIES WOULD SUCCEED IN IMPROVING THE ILO.

7. THE LO LEADERSHIP EXPRESSED SATISFACTION AT THE JUST CONCLUDED NATIONAL INCOMES NEGOTIATIONS. THEY WERE SOMEWHAT RESENTFUL OVER WHAT THEY FELT WAS AN EXORBITANT FARM SETTLEMENT. HOWEVER, THEY WERE CERTAIN THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE ABLE TO DELIVER THE AGREED 3 PERCENT REAL WAGE INCREASE TO THE AVERAGE WORKER, BY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HOLDING INFLATION TO 9 PERCENT AS IT HAD PROMISED.
BREMER

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